

MUSASHI #9

MIYUKI TAKAHASHI

MUSASHI #9

volume 5



by Miyuki Takahashi

DIRECT SALES

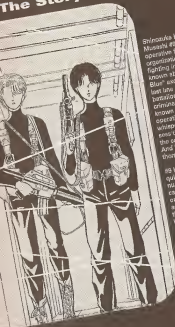


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The Story Thus Far!



Shinobu Kagi, AKA Musashi #2, is a field operative for an organization comprised of fighting injustice. Little is known about "Ultimate Blue" except that they're the last line of defense against bastards of terrorists and criminals. Even less is known about its field operatives—though it's whispered that they possess the ability to change the course of world history. And Number Nine is one of them.

She has saved lives, and quite possibly the world, on numerous occasions—but can she withstand an attack on her own heart? Can an agent that is able to save the world by a single action keep from falling in love?

The history of mankind has been one of wars. Race. Religion. Philosophy. The causes are untold.

The combatants have their own justifications, but on occasion, some create a volatile situation that threatens to destroy the world.

Ultimate Blue.

An organization shrouded in complete secrecy. Also known as "the other United Nations." Nobody knows when it was created. Nobody knows where it is based.

The Blue of the Seas.
The Blue of the Skies.
The Blue of the Earth.

The last line of defense against chaos.

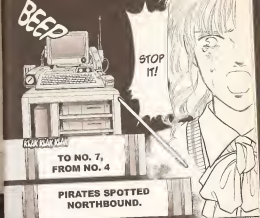
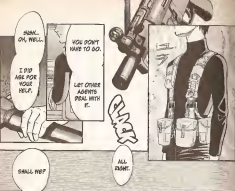


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MUSASHI #9

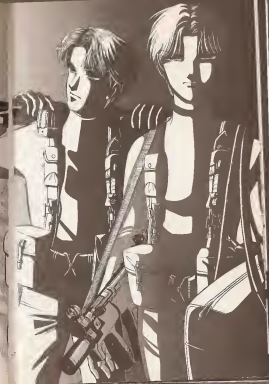
5





9番目の ムサシ

Mission 10: Athena, Part 5



YOU WERE
REALLY
TICKED 'BOUT
SHINGO
SPLITTING 'ON
HIS OWN.

YOU KNOW,
LIKE,
PAYBACK
FOR
YESTER-
DAY.

UH-
HUH.

WHAT DID
YOU THINK
IT WAS?

OH.

IS THAT
ALL?

I BEAT
HIM UP
OR
SOME-
THING?

COME ON,
I WASN'T
ANGRY.
THAT WAS
JUST AN
ACT.

AN ACT?
YEAH, RIGHT.
THERE AIN'T NO
ONE HERE WHO
BELIEVES THAT
ONE.

AND PULL
HIM OUT
OF BED?

LEAVE HIM
ALONE.

I WOULDN'T
DO THAT IF I
WERE YOU.

WHATEVER,
TOWSON.

IF HE'S
SICK,
HE'S
SICK.

MAYBE I'LL
BATTLE HIS
CASE LATER.

WELL,
YEAH,
BUT--

ONE
MORE
THING.

WHY
NOT?







OF ALL THE PLACES SHE COULD'VE TOGGED IT.

WHAT DO YA EXPECT? THE TIGERS HAD PROBABLY PUSHED IT AROUND AND COVERED IT UP WITH SAND.

NO LIPSTICK YET?



THEY'RE ^{NEW} GUEST.

THE GUY HAS IT PRETTY ROUGH, THOUGH.

WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?

Something new's happened between those two.

Mind you, she was acting all weird yesterday.

"She's staying at a friend's house. They have to do an important project."

Gee, something's definitely wrong.

AMM.

Some answer. I'll bet you she's staying at Kef's.

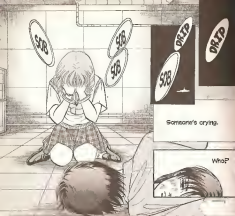
But it's okay if she stays the night at a friend's?

Her dad hired bodyguards 'cause some creep was like, stalking her.

I wonder where they are.

Her parents must really trust this friend. Or Aid forced this one on them.

Probably the latter.



Someone's crying.

Who?

It's a girl.

Why's she here?

Oh, yeah, that's right.
Some goons were tryin' to kidnap her.
I guess they took me along for the ride.

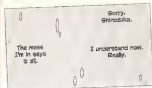


SORT OF.
CAN YOU
HELP ME
3P?

ARE YOU
ALL
RIGHT?

HEY...

What a
bunch of
losers.
They didn't
have to cuff
a girl.



Sorry,
Shinozuka.

The more
I'm in ways
to all.

I understand now.
Really.

I deserved every bit of
this. I probably screwed
things up for her just
because I wanted to sort
out the noise in my head.

"You're a nuisance."

"You're nothing."







IN FACT, I
GOT IN THE
WAY. MAYBE
I'M GONNA BE
SEND OUT TO
DEY, YEAP?



DEAY?

ANYWAY,
JUST SIT
TIGHT FOR
A BIT
LONGER.
YOU CAN
COUNT
ON ME.

Who
is
he?

I mean, is he...?

What's Kel
to him?



DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT.
STAY COOL
UNTIL THEN.

THEN SHE'S
ON HER WAY.

SHE'S PRETTY
PARANOID ABOUT
MISSIONS, SO
YOU CAN COUNT
ON HER TO KILL
YOU OUT.



YEAH, I
KNOW HER.

I'M BEING
PROTECTED,
TOO. FOR A
DIFFERENT
REASON,
THOUGH.

AND, I
RELEVE
YOUR
STORY,
TOO.

SO I
KNOW ALL
ABOUT
HER.

SINO-
ZAK?

YOU
KNOW
SINO-
ZAK?

OH, I GET IT.
THAT'S WHAT SHE
CALLS HERSELF
AT YOUR
SCHOOL.



IT WON'T
WORK OUT,
THOUGH.
WE'RE
WORLDS
APART.

HARD
TO
SAY.

I WISH
WE WERE.

ARE
YOU
FRIENDS?

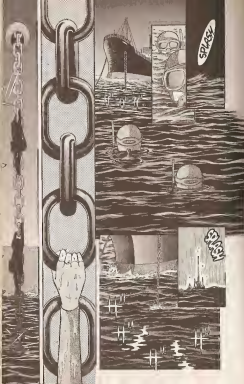


SHE
PROMISED
TO
PROTECT
YOU?

SHE
FROM
HER,
YEAH?

SHE SAID
SHE WOULD.

OR...
YES.



STRAIGHT LINE
FROM THE
HEADLAND, RIGHT
BY THE TWO
ROCKS.

IT'S
HERE.

THE GIRL
WASN'T LYING.
WE
SHERATCHED TO
CAP THE KID.

DIP ON THE
METAL
DETECTOR.
ARE YOU
POSITIVE IT'S
HERE?

NOPS
NO SIGN
OF IT.

WELL?

THE BOSS IS
GONNA GREN
US OUT.
AGAIN, IF WE
DON'T FIND IT
QUICK.

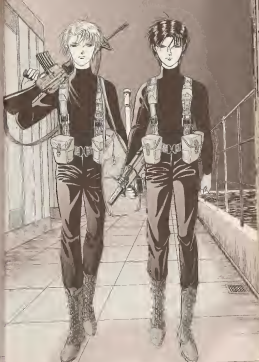
NOW
GUT
HASTIN'
TIME AND
GET ON
WITH THE
SEARCH.

HAVES IT
MEANT THE
WORLD TO
HER.
WHO
CARES?

HOW COULD
SHE
REMEMBER
SOMETHIN'
LIES THAT,
HMP?











OOF!!

WAAH

JOHN, I'M
GONNA GO
GRAB
SOMETHING
TO EAT.

YEAH.

GLAD
HEARD.



HEY!
WHO ARE
YOU?!

DISABLE
ALL OF THE
LOCKS ON
THIS GEF.
THEN THE
SEN-
SORS
GPP,
TOO.



HI
THERE.



IMPROVED
SENSORS?

VERY HIGH
TECH
FOR A
FREIGHT-
ER.

AND,
IT PRETTY MUCH
GUARANTEES THE
TWO ARE AT THE
OTHER END.

NO.
THE DOOR LOCK
IS PROBABLY
COMPUTERIZED,
AS IS THE ONE TO
THE ENGINE
ROOM.

IT'LL BE
FASTER TO
KNOCK THEM
OUT AT THE
SOURCE.

DO WE
DISABLE
THEM? IT'LL
TAKE TIME.

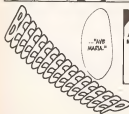


LET'S
GO.

COM-
PUTER
ROOM?

YOU'LL
NEED THE
PASSWORD.







THAT'S RIGHT.

GOOD.

THERE ARE INTRUDERS!

SOMEONE JAMMED A CABLE INTO THE FID-TELLES!

WHAT IS IT?



LET'S SPLIT UP AS PLANNED.

THEY FOUND IT—LIES THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO.

FEEDING THE HOSTAGES IS SECONDARY.

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS TO IDENTIFY AND APPREHEND THE MOLE.



ALL DOOR LOCKS DISENGAGED



THE DOOR'S OPEN. NEXT PHASE.

SORRY, BUT WE NEED YOU OUT OF THE WAY FOR A WHILE.

HAHO.



YES. I'M IN COMPLETE CONTROL.

ARE YOU...
...ALL RIGHT?

HEED?

YES?



SHINO-ZAKU!

SHINO-ZAKU!



YOU MADE IT IN ALL BY YOURSELF?

I'M USED TO THIS.



Oh, man, oh, man. She's really ticked.

CLICK

SE... KOU?



HONEST?



BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF, ALL RIGHT?

GOOD LUCK, THEN.



HEY.



IT'S OKAY NOT TO BE SO GOLD.



BZZZZZZ

BZZZZZZ BZZZZZZZZZZ

ALARMS! SOMETHING'S UP!

WHAT'S GOING ON? I'M SCARED.



OPEN

CRUNCH WHAM

PHEE WH-WHAT?



SHINO-ZAKU



I SEE.
WELL
DONE.

WHAT DO
WE DO
WITH THE
AGENT?



YES,
ADRIAN.
IT'S THE
SAME ONE
FROM THAT
NIGHT.

HE WAS
TRYING TO
FORGE
THE HOB-
TAGS.



ARE
HOB
SUSPECT?



THEY
KNOW?
THEY
MANAGED TO
CATCH THE
ULTIMATE
BLUE
AGENT?



BECAUSE
OF ME, HE
WAS--

HEY,
I'M--

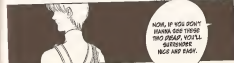
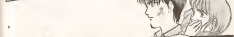
TOO
BAD...
PARTY'S
OVER.

GET UP.
WE'RE
GOING.



WE WERE
WAITING FOR
YOU,
ULTIMATE
BLUE.

WELCOME
TO OUR
SHIP.



NOW, IF YOU DON'T
WANNA SEE THESE
THIRTY DEAD, YOU'LL
SURRENDER
NICE AND EASY.



WHAT GUY
EXPECT?
HIS
COVER IS
ALL BUT
BLOWN.

THE GUY
JUST AS
PANICKING.

THE GUY IN THE
PENTAGON
WANTS IT
FOUR?
A.S.A.P.

YOU GONNA
HELP WITH
FINDING THE
LIPSICK.



SURE-
BUT!

YEAH?
WELL, HE
SHOULD
TRY A RIGHT
ONE.

LEAVES HIM.
HE AIN'T
GONNA
MORRIS.

WHAT
ABOUT
THIS?



DON'T
TOUCH
ME.



SURE, HE MAY
HAVE BEEN A
U.S. AGENT.

STILL, I
CAN'T
BELIEVE
IT WAS
THIS
EASY.

HE'S FRIENDLY
WITH THE GUY.

IF THE GUY LIES,
WE CAN USE HIM AS
BETTER LEVERAGE.

BUT, HE
WAS JUST
A KID.



KEEP HIM
ALIVE UNTIL
THE
LIPSICK IS
FOUND.



SMASH



WHAT'S
YOUR
CODENAME
AND
NUMBER?

ULTIMATE
BLUE?
I THOUGHT
THEY'RE
SUPPOSED TO
BE ON-
GO-
ANYONE.

H
M
P
H

STOP
IT!

LAY
OFF,
YOU
BUTT-
HEAD!



SORRY, MS. INEAKANA, BUT I HAVE GOOD REASON FOR NOT TAKING THEM OFF.

I WILL GET YOU OUT OF THIS. I PROM-ISE.
TRUST ME--AND WAIT.

Because you're really mad?!

Why not?!



LEAVE THIS IN THEIR HANDS. YOUR WRISTS WON'T HURT AS MUCH.

MAY I SEE YOUR HANDS?

Whos. How come she gets the royal treatment?!



I dunno. It's like you know you can get through anything if she's around.

You gotta admit it, though.

It's totally reassuring what she's around.

And it's not because she's real tough.



WHAT?



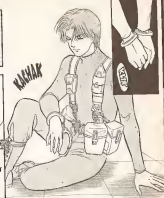
YOUR HAND-GEPPS.

THEY WERE OFF?

YES.



THEN WHY DID YOU LET THEM BE YOUR?



KACHAK



SORRY, NO.

WHATEVER. HURRY UP AND TAKE THESE OFF. I CAN'T EVEN GO WITH THESE ON.



WHAT?





STILL,
IT'S TIME
TO GET
EVEN.

IT
WAS
NOTHING.

THE BOONS
DON'T CATCH
ON.

I MEAN,
YOU ARE
A GOOD
YEAR?

THEY
WORCE
YOU
PRETTY
GOOD.

HOW
ABOUT
YOU
NOW
OKAY?

JUST
WATCH.

I'LL MAKE
THEM
REGRET IT.

THEY'LL
WISH THEY
WERE DEAD.

Mission 10, Athens, Part 5 - End



But not
when she
talks to her.

GOOD.

She's the
Kel I know
when I talk
to her.

Completely
different.

She's
different...



Maybe it's
just me.

It was only for like
a second, but she
looked like she was
going to cry or
something.



It is
because
of him?

I've
never
seen Kel
like this.



hey.

Then,
what's he
to her?

I swear,
though
after this,
she looked
really
angry.



I guess you had to
put the cuffs back
on.



The silent
treatment.
Just great.

It's afterwards
that kills me,
though.



I really like you—
if that even means
anything.

I don't care who you are or
what you do. It don't change a
thing.

How old it come
to this?

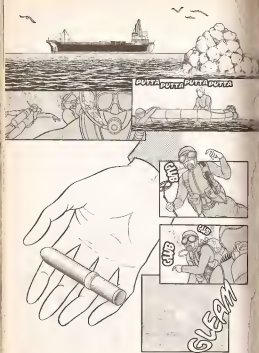
It won't be like I
was trying to
get in your
way.

But, you're tryin'
to save the
world. The last
thing you need
is some guy
hittin' on you,
yash?



I just wanted
to sort out
the noise in
my head.





As if I
could
tell her
now.

I gotta stop
thinkin' only
about myself.

I've made
things bad
enough as
they are.

I WAS
JUST
THINKIN',
YOU
KNOW?

NAH,
I'M
FINE.

DOES IT
HURT?
YOU SEEM
OUT OF IT.

SEE-
SAY?

What's
more--

What's more,
I already
know what
you're gonna
say to a guy
like me.

Like I
said.

I hope
I can.

And that's
to stay
outta your
way.

There's
only one
thing I
can do.

Department of
Defense—Pentagon



Athene is the ancient
Greek goddess of
wisdom—and war.

She sprang fully armed
from the head of Zeus, her
father and the king of the
gods.

It is said Nike, the goddess
of victory, stood upon her
right hand.



Mission 10: Athena, Part 6



ULTI-
MATE
BLUE?



THE BANE AND FILE DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW DANGEROUS ULTIMATE BLUE IS.



IT MEANS THEY FOUND IT IN TIME.



THEY GOT TO IT BEFORE THAT HITIT MIND DROPPED IT TALKED.

AND THAT MEANS WE CAN FINALLY GET OUT OF HERE.



THEY FOUND THE LIP-STICK?

ARE YOU SURE ?!



IT'S BEEN A WHILE
SINCE THEY POKED
US, SO IT MUST BE
THE MIDDLE OF
THE NIGHT.



THEY TOOK OUR
WATCHES, AND THEY
STUCK US IN A
ROOM WITHOUT
WINDOWS. TALK
ABOUT LOSIN'
COMPLETE TRACK
OF TIME. SURE!

I
WONDER
WHAT
TIME IT
IS.



WH-
WHAT?!

STARE



WH-
WHAT'S
ALL THAT
ABOUT?

GET



THAT
LOOK.

YOU.

YOU LOOK
KID, DON'T
YOU?

IF THEY STEP IN,
WE MIGHT NOT
EVEN HAVE A
COUNTRY TO GO
BACK TO.

WE HAVE TO
WAKE GUYS
NONE OF THE
KIDS BECOME
INVOLVED.



THE AGENT
PROBABLY HAD
VERY HIGH UP.
ITS AID COULD
BE A USEFUL
SABOTAGING
GUY.

ULTIMATE
PLUS WON'T
WANT TO
SACRIFICE A
CHILD.



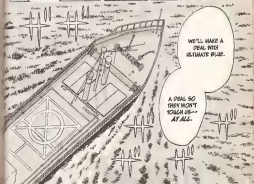
HURRY UP AND
FIND OUT THE
CODENAME
AND NUMBER!

SO
WHATEVER
IT TAKES!



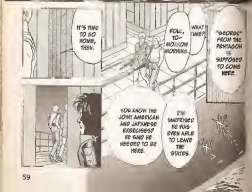
ANY SIGN
OF OTHER
ULTIMATE
PLUS AGENTS?

NO...
NO, SIR.



WE'LL MAKE A
DEAL WITH
ULTIMATE PLUS.

A DEAL SO
THEY WON'T
TOUCH US--
AT ALL.



WTF

WTF

WTF

WTF

WTF

WTF

WTF

WTF

LAY
OFF,
YOU
GOONS!

PLEASE!

STOP
IT!

YOU'RE PRETTY
TOUGH. I GUESS
YOU AIN'T AN
ULTIMATE PLUS
AGENT FOR
NOTHING.

ARE YOU
READY TO
TALK NOW?

THIS IS
THE LAST
TIME.

WHAT'S
YOUR
CODENAME
AND
NUMBER?

NEW!

SECRETARY
OF
DEFENSE,
MR.
JACKSON?

HENDERSON,
HERE.

"GEORGE"
AT THE
PENTAGON?

TIME TO
SEE WHAT
HE LOOKS
LIKE, THEN.

THE
"SUBMERGED
FISH" IS
"GEORGE." IT'S
GOING TO
SLEEPAGE
TOMORROW AT
0400.

TIME TO
GO
FISHING,
GE.





SHIN,
A
WORD.

BUT,
LIKE,
WHO'S
HE?

MON. KEN'S
REALLY
AND SOME.

LIKE, SHE'S
TOTALLY
OKEAY EVEN
AFTER ALL
THAT.

YOU KNOW,
THAT GUY
BLONDE
GUY?



THAT IS
BEE
PERSON.

THAT?



HE WORKS FOR
THE SAME
ORGANIZATION.
HE'S JUST AS
GOOD.

I CAN SEE THAT.



HE'S THE GUY
THAT'S JUST
RIGHT FOR
BEE.

REMEMBER
WHAT I
SAID?



SHINGO
AID?



SOME-
THING
LIKE
THAT.



I ALSO NEED
YOU TWO TO
HELP US JUST
A BIT MORE.

ANYWAY,
JUST
NAME IT.

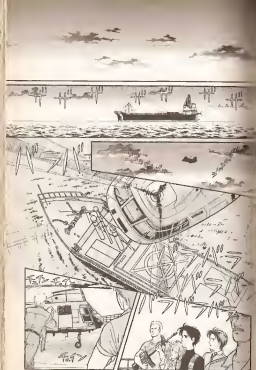
THAT'S...
ALL
RIGHT.

IT'S TIME TO
GET SOME
FARBACK ON
THESE JERKS!

YEAH, IT HAS
TO FLUSH OUT
SOMEBODY
HIDING.

THAT
MEANS...

SHINGO
GOT
CAUGHT
ON
PURPOSE?



WHEN IT'S
TIME, WE'LL
CREATE A
DIVERSION.

WE NEED YOU TO
LOOK AS THOUGH
YOU'RE STILL CAPTIVE.
IT'S JUST UNTIL THAT
SOMEONE KNOWS
SHOWS HIMSELF.

THEN, LOOK
FOR COVER
SOMEWHERE
SAFE.



BE...
I'LL
MAKE
IT SO
THEY'LL
COME
OFF IN A
SECOND.

WHAAAAAT?!

YOU'RE
PUTTING
THEIR
BACK ON?



AND, THE BRICK I'M
IMPERSONATING
ISN'T GOING TO GET
UP UNTIL NOON
TOMORROW--
THANKS TO A LITTLE
SLEEPING PILL.

NO. THEY
REALLY DID
WANT THE
GUARD CHANGED.



NOW
THAT YOU'RE
SHOWN UP,
WOULDN'T THEY
CATCH ON?



LET'S HOPE
IT ALL GOES
TO PLAN.
GOOD NIGHT.

CNO
FOR
NOW.







YOU'RE
GOOD TO
GO!

HUH?



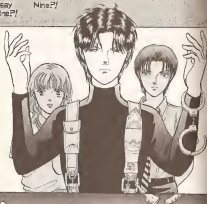
nothin'
there?!

SADON!
SADON!

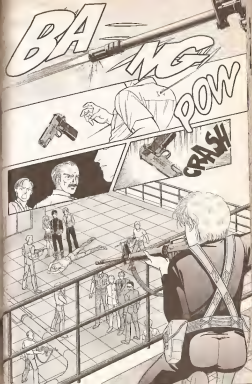


Did he
say
Nine?!

Nine?!

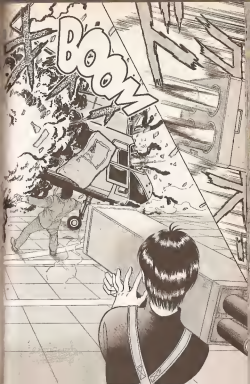


CLICK









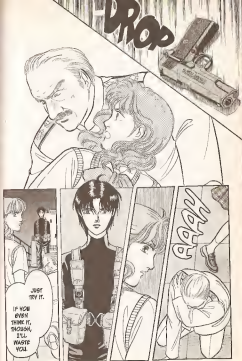


AND, I'M
GOING TO
DO SOME
KNOWING I
KILLED ONE
OF THE NINE



I DO BELIEVE
SOMEBODY
ONCE SAID, "IT'S
NOT OVER TILL
IT'S OVER."







SA!

WNP BUT, HE'S ALSO ULTIMATE...



IT'S A SECRET

HE STILL HAS TO GO UNDERGO IN THE NAVY.



THE NIGHT IS THROUGH



IT'S OVER.

YOUR SUPERNAVES ARE HERE TO "WELCOME" YOU. AFTER ALL, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO INSPECT THEM IN TODAY'S JUNE EXERCISES.

SEE?



AHS, SO ARE YOU.



Shingo?



REINERSON, I DO BELIEVE WE'RE ARE.

HOW? HOW?



IT'S THE END OF THE LINE, ADMIRAL. WHAT?

I SHOULD ALSO POINT OUT THE SECRETS YOU SHOULD HAVE TAKEN SO MUCH WITH.



IT WOULD'VE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE HELP OF ULTIMATE BLUE.

YOU WERE VERY DIFFICULT TO EXPOSE.



YOU DID IT TO CATCH ME.

YOU'RE FIRST ADMIRAL. GARRISON'S... I GET IT. NOW GET THIS UP.



NO.
IT WAS A
FAILURE.

BESIDES, YOUR
MISSION WAS A
SUCCESS.
EVERYTHING
WORKED OUT. SO,
EVERYTHING'S
COOL, YEAH?

LOOK! IF IT MEANS
ANYTHING, I'M
REALLY SORRY,
YEAH? BUT GIMME A
BREAK. I DID WHAT
ANYBODY
WOULD'VE DONE.

SAY
WHAT?

IT'S A
FAILURE.

MY
FIRST
ONE.

WORSE STILL, I
LET SOMEONE
WHO GROWN UP IN
A PEACEFUL
ENVIRONMENT
SHOOT A GUN.

MY OVERSIGHT
RESULTED IN
SERIOUS HARM
TO YOU.

YOU'RE
THE
ONE
PEE-
SON...

...I DIDN'T
WANT THIS
TO
HAPPEN
TO.

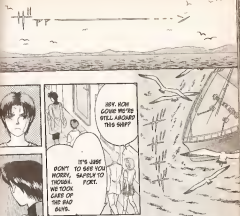
WUP?
THEY'RE
OKAY
NOW.

LOOK.

NOW ARE
YOUR
WOUNDS?

YOU
KNOW?

IT'S
NOT
LIKE
THAT.



HEY, NOW
GIVE ME'RE
STILL AROUND
THIS SHIP?

DON'T
TO WORRY,
THOUGH.
WE TOOK
CARE OF
THE BAD
GUYS.

IT'S JUST
TO SEE YOU
SAFELY TO
PORT.

LIKE, I GOT
HARRED
BECAUSE...
WELL... I WAS
STUPID, YEAH?

HEY, ARE YOU,
LIKE, STILL
REALLY MAD AT
ME?

WHAT YOU
MEAN, "NOT?"

YOU AIN'T
SAID JACK
SO ME THE
WHOLE
TIME.

NO,
I'M
NOT.

I know Shingo was something special to her. I just knew it deep down inside.

I know she wanted to cry when she saw Shingo's wrist. And when she was really angry she was angry at them—and herself.

But I know it was this "real" her when she smiled and apologized to me.

I guess she doesn't show her real self too often.

I could tell.

NO, NO. I'M NOT UPSET OF ANYTHING.

REALLY.

OH?

GOOPS, MAYBE YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THAT.

WE CAN STILL BE THE BEST OF FRIENDS, CAN'T WE?

I MEAN, WE'RE BOTH GIRLS.

SHE'S REALLY BEEN HONEST WITH HERSELF.

IT'S ABOUT TIME.

SHE COULDN'T BEAR TO LOOK AT SHINGO.

IT WAS HARD ON HER. THE SITUATION DIDN'T ALLOW US TO PRESS YOU RIGHT AWAY.

I NEVER WANTED THIS TO HAPPEN. SORRY.

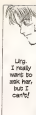


SEN-
GOT?

4-
YEAR?



What
was
that
all
about?



Urg.
I really
want to
ask her,
but I
can't!



Um...
Ah,
forget
it.



Um...
Hey...



SEVEN
WANTS TO
MEET YOU
OUTSIDE.

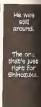


Hi...

Oh.



Daily dose
of reality
can't
right
up.



He was
sitting
around.

The one
that's just
right for
Shinobu.



AH...
YEAR...

MORN-
ING.



GOOD
MORN-
ING.



SEE...



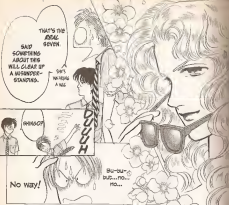
DIMMING



I CAN GO,
SO I'M
LETTING HIM
REST.



Um...
WHERE'S
ONE-
HUNDRED?



THAT'S THE
REAL
SEVEN.

SAY
SOMETHING
ABOUT THIS
WILL CLEAR UP
A MISUNDER-
STANDING.

HEY!
WATCH
A MILE



SHOCK!

NO WAY!

BU-BU-
BUT...NO...
NO...



IN SERIOUS
MINDS, DO
YOU KNOW
WHO THE
GODDESS OF
WISDOM AND
HAIR IS?

HEY ALL
OF THE
SOME-
BODIES
WASHER!

SEVEN.

Then...then...what
will I prove? all
worked up for only
whole time?!

"SERIOUS."



THAT'S
SEVEN'S
CODENAME.



HEY, SEVEN.
NOW ARE YOU?



Trippy
memories
were all
that she
left me.

And, with
everything
taken care
of, she
went back
to the
States.



Athena...
Venus...
I really
couldn't
care.

All I know is
that the
goddess of war
likes noodles--
and messing
with my head.

There's a postscript, too.



Someone who
transferred out
left some new
lipstick for a
certain girl.

After all that, things got quiet.

Nothin' went down for a long time.

Because of that, Kou stuck around for a long time.

It was pretty quiet for a while, yeah?

No rowdies. No "incidents."

Shirozuka Kou.
Codename: Musashi.

Agent Number Nine for Ultimate Blue, also known as "the other United Nations." One other thing. Kou's a girl.

For a long, long time...

I really liked her.





NOW THAT THAT'S SETTLED, TIME IS SHORT. WE'LL EMB ROWE.



ALL RIGHT. I'LL GIVE YOU A DISCREET WORKOUT.

I literally prayed they'd continue.

SENODOKA, WAIT! SLOW DOWN!



So, I wanted to make this most of there—for as long as possible.



I damn. I really dug it when she kidded around.

I guess I just wanted it to continue for as long as possible.

I really wanted the good times to continue. Ya know?

But, I knew our days were numbered.



LIKE, COULD YOU HELP ME WITH MY ENGLISH?

I THINK I'M GONNA GET GUILTY TOMORROW, YEAH?



YOU'LL NEVER IMPROVE IF YOU DON'T DO IT YOURSELF.

I want to learn to cry? Do tell her, well, I liked her.



BUT, I DECIDED TO KEEP STOP AND A TIGHT ID.

NO.

AK, COME ON! YOU CAN SPEAK A HUNDRED LANGUAGES. YOU CAN HELP ME WITH ONE!



RYAN?

I WAS JUST WONDERING!

BE... REAR... AM... GM...



LOSER.

Some of it had to do with a guilt trip. I totally made a mess of things for her in the "Athena" incident.



I guess the biggest reason was that everything was running smoothly, and I just didn't wanna screw it up.

REG
REG
REG

Some, but not all.



—NUCLEAR
MISSILE
LAUNCHER.



SO, I HAVE
TO MAKE
SURE THIS
GETS TO THE
RIGHT
ULTIMATE
BLUE
PEOPLE.

HOW CAN YOU
BE SO
BIASED?

ACTUALLY, HE
WANTED US TO
DISMANTLE IT
BEFORE IT FELL INTO
THE WRONG HANDS.
CERTAIN ELEMENTS
WANT TO TOPPLE HIS
GOVERNMENT.

A LEADER
OF A
COUNTRY,
WHICH I'LL
LEAVE
UNNAMED,
ASKED US
TO TAKE
CARE OF
IT.



BE
CARE-
FUL,
THOUGH,
YOUNG

I'LL BE
BACK BY
TONIGHT.



THERE'S
SOMETHING I
HAVE TO
DELIVER.

NINETEEN WILL
GO WITH YOU.

WHAT'D
YOU DO?
A BIT EARLY
FOR
SCHOOL,
ISN'T IT?

HEY?
KID?

GOOD
MORN-
ING.



SOME-
THING TO
DELIVER?



IT'S
IMPOR-
TANT.

NO,
IT HAS TO
BE.

WHY?

GREEN MAKES
ONE-NINE
GO.

IT'S
JUST A...
NOTHING
REALLY.

WHAT
IS IT?

YES.

WHAT?
THAT?



DID YOU
TELL NINE?

The
guy
knows
how I
feel
about
her.

TELL
HER
HIMSELF?

YOU HAD ME
FINNED DOWN,
AND YOU DON'T
REMEMBER?



One-niner
keeps guard
when Kou
can't.

One
problem,
though.



GASP



GOOD.

RE...UM...
UM...AH...

NAH.

Not good.
Definitely
not good.



ARGH!!

SHUT
UP!



NOTHING
WOULD'VE
GONE UP IF
EVEN IF YOU
DID.



BEHOLD,
IT'S NOT AS
IF WE CAN
BE HERE
FOREVER.

We're worlds
apart.



I keep telling
myself over
and over.

But I am
allowed to
wish,
aren't I?

I know
it's
obvious.

It's stuff
like this
that gets
me thinking
every time.

I wish I could be with her--always.

SHINOBU



I'M YOUR
BODYGUARD
TODAY.

HURRY UP
AND GET
READY FOR
SCHOOL.



WHY THE
REACTION?
YOU KNOW
THE ROUTINE BY
NOW.

WAUGH!



No wonder
one-niner
is Nine's
doubt.

I don't care if
it's routine.
It still freaks
me out every
time I see the
exact same
face.

JUST DON'T
SHAKE UP
LIKE THAT,
OKAY?

UM, YEAH,
RIGHT,
ONE-
NINER.

See. He
managed to get
away when Kou
took down White
Dragon.



He might come
after me 'cause I
helped take down
his crew, but he
probably won't.
Still, Kou
watches out for
me just in case.

Ah, man,
that's
right.

The only
reason why
she's here
is to
protect me.

That's all.

And when he's caught...

SOON.
VERY
SOON.

It's over.

Game over.

There's no more
reason for her to
stay here.

STOP
USING
YOUR
GUESS.

YOU
KNOW
I'M A
GUY.

I'M
NOT
LIKE
HER.

Yeah...
But...
But...

THAT'S WHY
YOU'RE
HERE, ISN'T
IT?

PEOPLE START
FIGURING OUT
YOUR MOTIVATIONS.
AND THAT
CAN BE
DIRETENTIAL.

IT'S A BAD IDEA
FOR SOMEONE
WHO'S NEEDED
AROUND THE
WORLD STAYING IN
ONE SPOT FOR
TOO LONG.

OUR JOB IS
TO PROTECT
YOU UNTIL LAI
OF WHITE
DRAGON IS
CAUGHT.

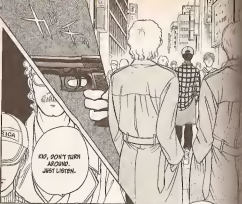
Still, I
DOUBT WE'LL
BE HERE
MUCH
LONGER.

MEN AND WOMEN
DEVELOP
DIFFERENTLY. IT
WILL BECOME
OBVIOUS.

I CAN'T
DOUBLE FOR
HER THEN.

AND THERE IS
NOT AN EASY
ONE TO FIND A
DOUBLE FOR.

YOU'LL BE
ABLE TO GET
AROUND
WITHOUT
WORKING.



KID, DON'T TURN AROUND. JUST LISTEN.



MAKE A SCENE AND YOU'RE DEAD.

GIVE US THAT CASE--REAL QUIET LIKE.



SORRY, KID, BUT THERE'S THE BREASTS.

IT AIN'T A TOY. JUST HAND IT OVER.

PUT... PUT... TH- THIS...

STAY REAL QUIET LIKE.



THE KID'S GOT IT.

THAT'S IT.



WHO'S THE KID?

OUR GUYS SPOTTED THE KID COMING OUT OF THE SAME APARTMENT WITH IT.

A "FRIEND" SPOTTED IT BEING TAKEN INTO AN APARTMENT.



LET'S DO IT.

WHATEVER. MAKES OUR JOB EASIER.

WHO KNOWS? BUT, IT'S JUST A KID. PROBABLY A CLUELESS GOFER.





AS
FLAMES.



The real one was handed
over a while back.



Maybe we'll do more than
take out your Japanese
spendings. Maybe we'll take
them out in your country
too.



All that's left is to locate
your hideout in Japan using
the transmitter planted in the
case.



I guess I did
pray for it.

I mean, the same
thought kept
going through my
head over and
over.

I wanted it to last.

I wanted it to last
for as long as possible.

I really did.

Answer in response to query from Musashi No. 9.

Possibility of injury or death to subject
S. Tachibana in joint operations:



70%

Answer in response to query
from Musashi No. 9.

Possibility of remaining with
subject S. Tachibana given
mission parameters:



0%





I NEED YOU HERE ASAP.
I'LL LEAVE THEM OUT.



SORRY, SHINGO.
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE A RAIN CHECK.



WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU HAVE BEEN MOODY SINCE YESTERDAY.
NAH, I'M FINE. REALLY.



BE...
YEAR.



FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY, STAY INSIDE.



I'VE CALLED 119, WHO'LL ESCORT YOU HOME.



POSS.

THEY FOUND THE TRANSMITTER. WE BELIEVE THEY'VE REACHED YOUR HAY.

BUT, TWO OF THEM WEREN'T AT THE HIDEOUT.

WE TOOK THEM OUT HERE AND AT HOME.



WHY'RE YOU SO PUMPED? YOU'VE BEEN PEAKY ALL DAY, GUSU.

WHAT? YOU SAY'S WAKKA GO, TOO?

LET'S GO DEAR SOMETHING TO EAT!
C'MON, IT SHOULD BE OVER ONCE IN A WHILE. BY THE WAY.

ALL RIGHT!
IT'S REALLY OVER!
I'M STARVED!



Ah! It's no sense in worryin' about somethin' I can't do anything about.

Kou's still here. Might as well make the most of each and every day.

HE, TOOH!

I'M IN!
ALL RIGHT! SHINGO SAYS HE'S FAYIN'!



PROBABLY YOUR GUIL, GUSU.

I'll make sure she doesn't forget me.

If nothing else, I'll make her remember me.

SORRY, I HAVE A CALL.



SHIN-
GOP!

It's
all
over.

I don't even
know what I'm
gonna do
anymore.

All this noise in
my head is
driving me
nuts!

What am I
gonna do?



ARE
GODS
NOW-
IN?

SHIN-GOP!

I NEED A
FAVOR,
GUYS.
PIN 'EM!

WHAT ARE
YOU
GON'N' DO
FOR ME?

What's the
point in
goin' after
her?

SHIN-
GOP!

SHIN-GOP!
IT'S
DANGEROUS!

GO!
GO!

GET
OUTTA
MY WAY!

STOP!
WAIT!



I'M ON IT.

It's a
mistake!

WHATEVER,
IT'S YOURS.

I know
it can't
be
helped.



YES,
SHIN-GOP.



It's always
always like this.

She takes off--
just like that.



They're only
looking for
one guy.

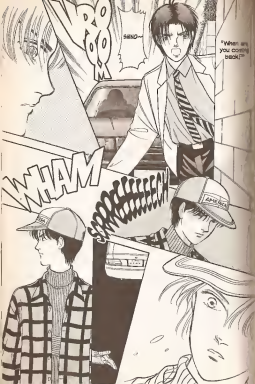
"WE CAN'T
BE HERE
FOREVER."

Suppose
he's
caught.

Let's
GO.

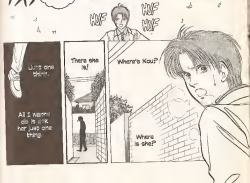
The good
times
-it's
gonna
last.

The truth is, I
can't even tell with
him - he alone
makes his memories
live.



"When are
you coming
back?"

SEND



Just one
thing.

There she
is!

Where's Kou?

All I want
do is ask
her just one
thing.

Where
is she?



...STAY
WITH ME.

I WANT
YOU TO...

I
LOVE
YOU.

THERE WAS
SOMETHING...
I... JUST HAD TO
SAY TO YOU.

DON'T
SAY A
THING.

DON'T SAY
A THING.

I'M
REALLY
SORRY.

I MESSED
THINGS UP
YET
AGAIN, HUN?

When are
you coming
back?

KOW...

EEEE--WOOO

EEEE--WOOO

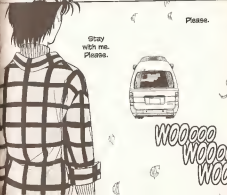
EEEE--WOOO

I
REALLY
DON'T
GARE.

WHO
WANTS
MENORES
ANYWAY?

When do you
want to do
somehin'
really worth
rememberin'?

SHINO...





"I LOVE YOU."



I hope it keeps going—
for as long as possible.



I literally pray it goes on.

For as long as possible.



Mission 11: Shingo's Decision - End



NO WAY!
THAT
WAS
YOU?!

W
H
A
A
T?
!



SORRY TO LET
YOU DOWN,
BUT I'M NOT
OF THAT
PERMISSION.



SAY
WHAT?

I GOT THERE
BEFORE YOU AND
MADE THE
SWITCH, YOU
IDiot.



This
means...
I...
I...

I told a
guy... "I love
you?"



BLEAAAAH!!

SAY
UP!
WIN?
AHE-
HEHE!

YOU
KEEP—

THAT'S NOT
IMPORTANT!
YOUR
STUPIDITY IS!



A Short Break

Thank you very much for reading this comic. So? Did you like "Athene"? I'll bet you the ending took you by surprise, didn't it? Heh heh heh heh

I wrote "Shingo's Decision" dwelling on how Shingo felt. So, I think it was a bit different from the usual stunts

However, his "decision" is eventually going to become very important to the story. Heh heh heh heh heh

The thing I liked drawing the most in "Athene" was Number Seven as a girl. I put extra effort into it because I wanted her to look obviously like a woman. I think I made her look really sexy. That will doesn't change the fact she likes noodles, though



JUST TO LET YOU
KNOW, I'M NOT A
WARRIOR.

BUT, DON'T I LOVE COM-
MUNISM, MY
LOVE?

"Memories of Eternity" is next. What developments await Nine and Shingo?

Please read on. You won't be disappointed!



9番目の ムサシ

Mission 12:

Memories
of Eternity,
Part 1





PIPING

WE'LL SOON BE
LANDING AT NATA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT.



PLEASE RETURN TO
YOUR SEATS AND
FASTEN YOUR SEAT
BELTS.



PASS

IF YOU
KEEP
NODDIN'
ON--

C'MON,
HONEY,
LISTEN UP.

BUT, SEE,
IT'S A
SAFETY
RULE.

LOOK!
YOU
MAY
TICKLE!

EXCUSE ME, SIR,
BUT SMOKING
ISN'T PERMITTED
BEFORE
LANDING.







I'M
DEAD
NEAT!

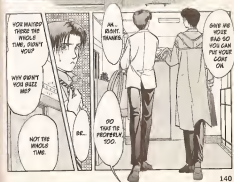


THE
DAY'S
STRENGTH
THAN
STREET!

FIRST GLASS
IS WITH
FRO-
PESSOR
PAINT

WHY'D THAT
STUPID ALARM
CLOCK GO OFF
AN HOUR LATER?







JUST THINKING.

WHAT?

Actually, thinking about it ain't gonna do no good either.

It don't matter if it was her or One-Niner.

The answer's still gonna be the same.



Maybe that's her answer.

She ain't said nothing.

Yeah, that's probably it.



I FEEL AWE-SOME.

POSITIVE. IT'S BEEN TWO MONTHS ALREADY.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FINE?

The girl I like is a secret agent for Ultimate Blue.

She's agent Number Nine for a huge organization protecting the world.

Shinozuka Kou.

THEN LET'S EUN. HE CAN STILL MAKE IT.



Her double says she ain't hear it.

They made a switch, so only we heard it.



I wonder, though.



How'd they manage to make a switch that fast?



"I LOVE YOU."

I blurted that out while I was dazed.

Go? Where'd that get me?

I'll admit I was out of it.

Before I'd have believed it.

But now, I can tell them apart no matter what.



Then what?

Just suppose it really was her.

BONG
BONG
BONG



Wish it stays this way
for as long as
possible.

BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG



BONG
BONG



We're worlds
apart. She's a
super agent. I'm
just a regular
dude.

I have
to
convince
myself of
that.

It's a
mission.
That's all.

She's sure to
protect me
from someone
dangerous.



I should be grateful.
For the peace and
calm.

The wish list is
pretty obvious.

Wish she'd
stay.

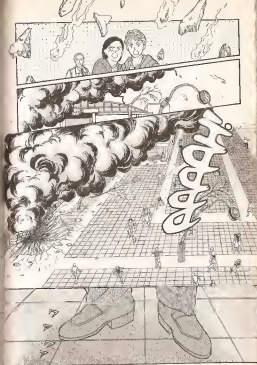
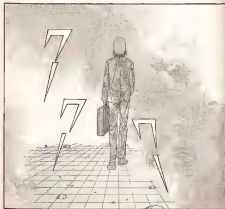
For how
uneventful
life is right
now.

And, for
the fact
she's even
here.

With the peace and
calm would last.











I really wish these good times would last.

I really do.

HEY, HEAR ABOUT IT?



THINK
DEEP
DEEP
DEEP
DEEP

EX-
CUSE
ME.

OH NO.

GAS
LEAK?

THERE WAS A
MIGRA
EXPLOSION IN
FRONT OF THE
STATION.

JUST A
MILE
AGO.

REALLY?
WHEN?



I
DESERVED
SOME,
TOO!

ME,
TOO!

YOU TOOK
MY
GROGGETTE.

YOU
DESERVED
IT.

THAT'S
MY HAM-
MERSEE.

HOW
YELL-
YELL!

HEY!

SEE YOU

LEAVE
ME
ALONE!

GET LOST!
YOU
STUPIDS
DON'T
DESERVE
SQUAT!

This is the reason, isn't it?



This is why I want to go continue.

I really wish
she'd always
be with me.

I really do.



SHRY UP.

YEAH, YEAH.

SO? WHAT'S THE PROBLEM NOW?

YOU'RE ONE-NINE, AREN'T YA?

HEHHEH HEH

IT'S OBVIOUS.

TAKE LONG?

WHO KNOWS?

IT MEANS, IF YOU'RE HERE, HER "MISSION" ANY OVER.

HUH?

SO, IS IT GONNA TAKE LONG?

DEE-K

DONG
DONG
DONG
DONG
DONG
DONG

It's really hard to believe days when nothin' happens are, like, good.

It's almost painful how well I know that now.

Just when it's rolling along nicely --WHAM!



I wonder
what's going
down.

One-Niner is
definitely not a
happy camper.

Definitely.

Did
something
happen to
Kou?



HEY, GUYS,
WHERE'RE
YOU HEADIN'?
CLASS IS
ABOUT TO
START.

FAMILY
EMERGENCY.
TAKE NOTES
FOR ME, WILL
YOU?

WE
NEED
TO TALK.

GET YOUR
GEAR AND
COME WITH
US.

THERE'S
HARDLY
ANY GOOD
NEWS.

I
guess.

I KEEP
BLOWING
MY
ASSIGNMENTS.

WHY IS
LOSING
PAINT IN
ME.

Not good!
I know it
was
because of
that!

I WILL CARRY
OUT MY
ASSIGNMENT
EVEN IF IT
MEANS
KNOCKING
PEOPLE OUT.

AND I WON'T
CARE—
EVEN IF
THEY'RE
YOUR
FRIENDS.

WHAT'S UP
WITH YOU?

ONE
HAPPY
CAMPER
YOU ARE
NOT.

SHH

IT'S
PARTLY
BECAUSE
OF
SOME-
ONE.

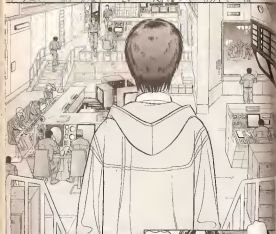
I WON'T
DO IT
AGAIN.

SORRY,
GUYS.

I
HOPE
NOT.

I'M
GOING TO BE
SERIOUS
FROM
NOW ON.





YOU'RE IN THE
JAPANESE
HEADQUARTERS
OF ULTIMATE
PLUS.

WHAT?
WHERE?

EE...
UM...



No way.

Here?

Nah. Can't be.



YOU CAN TAKE
OFF THE
BLINDFOLD
NOW.

The
elevator's
goin' down.

TELL ME
THAT
FIRST!

HERE.
HANG
ON.

Now
what?

THIS IS YOUR
COMPROMISE. YOU
HAVE TO SCHOOL.
YOUR SCHOOL.

I MEAN,
THERE'S
AN EXPLANA-
TION FOR
ALL THIS, RIGHT?

WH-
WHAT'S
GOIN' ON?

WE HAVE
SURVEILLANCE
CAMERAS SET
UP WHERE YOU
GENERALLY
GO.

JUST
WATCH
THIS.

BEEP

WOW

When did
they set
those
things
up?

WHAT YOU'RE
ABOUT TO SEE
HAS TAKEN AN
HOUR BEFORE
THIS.

YOU DO KNOW
ABOUT THE
EXPLOSION
NEAR THE
STATION?

WE LOST
THEM.

WHERE
YOU
FOLLOWED?

Followed?

Oh! So
that's why
they drove
like that!

THIS
WAY.

But, who'd
grab the car?
Who'd even
know it was
U.S.P?

SORRY TO
CALL YOU
OUT.

MAKE
YOURSELF
COMFORT-
ABLE.



Here.

Here's why I
have all this
protection.

He's the
threat.

HE
FINALLY
SEE-
FACED.



Wait?

White Dragon?



HE'S THE
ONE AFTER
YOU.



ARM.



TAKE A GOOD
LOOK AT THE
PERSON IN
FRONT OF THE
CLOCK
TOWER.



THAT'S THE
LAD
OF THE
WHITE
DRAGON
TRAD.

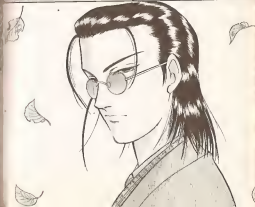
It's also the reason why
Number Nine of U.S. is here.
The only man here.

WE HAD AGENTS
LOOKING FOR HIM
THROUGHOUT THE
WORLD.

BUT, HE ENEM HE
WAS GOING UP
AGAINST US. HE
CAREFULLY STAYED
OUT OF FIGHT--
UNTIL NOW.

HE LEFT JAPAN
AND DISAPPEARED.
ALL THE WHILE,
THOUGH, HE WAS
GETTING A TEAM
TOGETHER.

WE CRUSHED
WHITE DRAGON,
BUT HE MANAGED
TO ESCAPE.





THEY WERE DESTITUTE, SO LONTON JOINED A TEAM TO HELP FEED THE FAMILY.

THEY'RE FROM THE SLUMS OF ACING ROAD, THE OLDEST OF SIX BROTHERS.

LAMP'S TALENTS WERE RECOGNIZED EARLY. NATURALLY, WHITE DRAGON MADE HIM, TOO.



LONTON IS LAM'S ONLY BLOOD RELATIVE LEFT.

THEIR YOUNGER BROTHERS WERE FORCED TO JOIN THE UNDERWORLD GAMES. THEY WERE LESS FORTUNATE. THEY WERE ALL KILLED IN THEIR WARS.

OF THE REMAINING FAMILY, THEIR PARENTS DIED DURING AN EPIDEMIC.

THEY MOVED UP IN THE RANKS.

WHY DOES HE WANT ME SO MUCH?

BECAUSE WHITE DRAGON WAS DEVISED?

THE REASON FOR WANTING YOU BECAME CLEARER WHEN WE SORTED LOOKING FOR HIM.

IF IT WERE JUST ABOUT WHITE DRAGON, HE'D ONLY WANT ME.

HE ACTUALLY WANTS BOTH OF US.

LAM IS LONTON'S YOUNGEST BROTHER.

HE'S PROBABLY READY NOW.

#BT, WHY?

#BT... BUT WHY NOW?

DO YOU REMEMBER LONTON, THE ONE WHO TRIED TO KILL YOU?

REMEMBER?

HE'S THE GUY WHO KILLED MY BEST FRIEND!

FOR NOW, THOUGH, I DON'T WANT YOU GOING OUT TOO WILD. AND STAY AWAY FROM ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS.

WE WILL DO OUR UTMOST TO PROTECT YOU. YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

REMEMBER, LAU IS AN EXPERT WITH EXPLOSIVES.

SHE'S GOT

THAT'S WHERE THINGS STAND.

WOULD BE SAFE.

YES, IT WILL BE INCONVENIENT UNTIL HE'S CAUGHT, BUT IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.

THAT'S WHY HE'S APPEALING US.

YOU ARE THE REASON LONDON WAS CAUGHT.

I AM THE ONE WHO CAUGHT HIM.

Revenge?



IT MEANS "REVENGE."



IT'S A SIGN WHITE DEASON USED TO USE.





See, there's
differences/P
I suppose.



I KNOW IT
PETER
THAN
ANYONE
ELSE.



I KNOW
I'M
BEN'S
STUPID.



HA HA



WE'RE
OUTTA
HERE.

SHINGO?



SLAM



HEY,
SHINGO.

SHUT UP.
DON'T
SAY
NOTHING!



I'M JUST
TAKIN' IT
OUT, ALL
RIGHT?
I DON'T
THINK IT'D
BE THIS
ROBIN.



WINE DIDN'T
WEAR IT THAT
WAY.

I
KNOW!



WE ALL
SEE
THINGS
DIFFER-
ENTLY,
RIGHT?

HELL, THOSE
DIFFERENCES
CAN HAVE YOU
SAVIN' SOME
PRETTY CRAZY
SHIT, NOW.



She's Missaki
of Ultimate
Blue.

She'll catch
you for sure.

Why am I
shaking?

It's not
'cause I'm
scared.

She stops being
Ginogaki—and
goes back to being
Missaki.

That is's game
over.



SURE.

THANKS,
ONE
MINE.

ALWAYS
TELL ME
BEFORE YOU
GO
ANYWHERE.

JUST
ONE
THING.

LISTEN.



SHE'S
MISSAKI
OF
ULTIMATE
BLUE.

YOU
HAVE TO
UNDER-
STAND.



SORRY.

YEAH...

I
KNOW.

THANK



The good times.

I knew there was gonna
be a day when they all
stopped.



I knew it.

I knew the day
was gonna come.

I knew it'd be
impossible.



But, how could I not pray?

I wanted them to
last as long as
possible.

But, even
then...
even then...
I prayed.

No. 7 Data

Code Number: 7
Code Name: Athena

Place of Birth: Unknown
Sex: Female

Age: Unknown; approx. 23 to 25

Height: Approx. 5' 10"

Weight: Unknown

Current Alias: Joseph Handerson

Currently undercover as a male
Warrant Officer in the US Navy



U.B. Members' File

No. 7



No. 23

Code Number: 19
Alias: Asami Teshitoko

One of Nino's many doubles.



No. 33

Code Number: 33
Alias: Yonegumi Chika

One of Nino's many doubles.



No. 39

Code Number: 39
Alias: Sai Koshin

With U.S.'s Japanese station.

No. 19 Data

Code Number: 19

Place of Birth: Unknown

Sex: Male

Age: Unknown

Closest of Nino's many doubles; often commands the others.

No. 19

